THE DESOTO COUNTY NEWS

Entered in the postoffice at Arcadia, Florida, as second-class mail matter.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
THE DESOTO PUBLISHING CO.
ARCADIA, FLORIDA.

EDWARD FITZGERALD,
EDITOR AND MANAGER.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

One year	$1.00
Six Months	.50
Three Months	.25

Advertising rates on application.

Telephone No. 17

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1905.

STAND BY SPARKMAN.

The Bartow Courier-Informant, in its last issue, reprints a eulogy of Hon. Herbert S. Phillips, which appeared in the Pasco County Democrat, and adds the following comment:

"To all of which we say, Amen! Mr. Phillips deserves the confidence of the people, who, if we are not very much mistaken, will invite him to a seat in congress from this district, at the next election."

For the grace and support of the Democratic party and the benefit of the people of the First Congressional District, as well as of the entire State, we trust that the prediction of our esteemed contemporary will fail of fulfillment, provided Hon. Stephen M. Sparkman is a candidate for re-election.

By this declaration we have no thought of reflection upon the character or the ambition of Mr. Phillips.

It is the privilege of every citizen to become a candidate for office.

Public office is a gift of the people, and no man who is chosen for public service should believe that he be allowed to hold such a position indefinitely.

Yet, in consideration of such a matter, as is now forced upon the people of this district, do not the factors of common benefit and political justice urge that Mr. Sparkman be retained in the office he has so dignified and in which he has displayed so high a degree of watchfulness for the needs of his constituents?

We think the matter should be looked upon from that view.

Leaving aside all other points of discussion—indeed there should be no other, as the character and conduct of Mr. Sparkman is beyond reproach—the question of his usefulness, both to his constituents and to the party of which he is so strong a pillar, form the basis of the argument for his retention.

The position Mr. Sparkman occupies in Congress is one attained by faithful and diligent work through the several terms that he has served.

No man, no matter how brilliant, or forcible, can gain success in Congress, except by following that same road which in every case requires years of travel.

Flamboyant speeches on the floor of the House and press dispatches of a member's doings are not indications of ability nor marks of value to a constituency.

Here, as elsewhere, it is the deeds, not the words, that brings the total of actual worth.

In this respect Mr. Sparkman has proved his strength. Through his efforts goodly appropriations have been made for improvement of Florida waters, and the work thus started will be continued if he is permitted to retain his seat.

The Rivers and Harbors Committee is the most important to Florida of all the Congressional committees, and in Mr, Sparkman's membership thereof the State possesses a distinct advantage.

His presence and work in this committee commands the esteem of his colleagues, and his opinions are respected by members of the opposite party,

With a Democratic minority in Congress incapable, as a unit, of compelling favorable legislation, is it not worthy of congratulation that we possess a member who has reached such a degree of eminence that not only are his opinions favorably received, but his advice sought and appreciated by those of opposite political faith?

Such is the standing of Mr. Sparkman in Congress, where perhaps he is better known than among the people of his district, as it is foreign to his nature to eulogize himself.

Would it not be folly to defeat such a man for re-election, and in view of the Democratic minority in Congress, an injustice to the party to withdraw a member possessing the strength to force recognition from his opponents?

Mistakes have been the bane of the Democratic party. In this instance, at least, refrain from error.

Only for one reason should another be chosen to fill the seat now occupied by Mr. Sparkman, and that is, if at any time he seeks election to the United States Senate.

Should he aspire to that position his triumphant election should follow, as a testimonial to his merit and appreciation of his labors in behalf of the people.

Among the "advisers" of Gov. Broward are Guy Metcalf and Bob McNamee. Wouldn't that be a pair to draw to in the event of State insurance.

"Editor John Collins has the ex-Governor's scalp hanging at his belt," declares the Apalachicola Times. If that is a fact Collins' belt sheuld be disinfected.

The Homeseeker Edition of the Wauchaula Advocate was issued last week, and a very attractive and interesting publication it is. It will be astonishing if it fails in its purpose of bringing settlers to that place, and we congratulate Editor Goolsby for his enterprise and the public spirit of his town which made possible the issuance of such a publication.

Reward.

The Southeastern Stock Growers Association, organized for the promotion of the best interests of the stock growers, fully appreciating the efforts of the County Commissioners of Osceola county to put a stop to fence cutting and other depredations detrimental to the best interests of stock growers and property owners, hereby offers a supplemental reward of Two Hundred Dollars for the arrest and conviction of any party or parties guilty of such acts, and at this time desires to say that it will offer its co-operation and assistance to commissioners of other counties in a similar way, to the end that the rights of the property owners shall be protected throughout the State.

Dated at Jacksonville, Florida, October 16, 1905, by order of the Executive Committee of the Southeastern Stock Growers Association. 10-20-4t

---

KEEPING TAB ON TIME

METHODS THAT WERE USED BEFORE THE DAYS OF CLOCKS.

Primitive Contrivances, Some of Which Are Still In Use—The Candle, the Sandglass and the Development of the Water Clock.

Curious it seems to find some of the most ancient and primitive contrivances for keeping time still in use in these modern days. In many churches as well as in monasteries and convents the graduated candles whose invention is popularly attributed, though doubtless mistakenly, to King Alfred are even now employed for reckoning the duration of prayers, and the same may be said of sandglasses, which, for the matter of that, are preferred by not a few twentieth century cooks as a convenient substitute for the clock in timing the boiling of eggs. As for the sundial, it is probable that no timekeeping invention dates back to so early an epoch. It was well known to the people of Babylon, from which great metropolis of the east the first instrument of the kind was brought to Jerusalem about 700 B. C.

It happens that many ancient sandglasses have been collected by the Smithsonian institution in Washington, some of them dating far back in the middle ages, and the scientists of that establishment, thinking it worth while to test them, have discovered that they are very inaccurate, some of them varying from correctness by as much as seven or eight minutes in the hour one way or the other. The obvious though rather curious explanation of this fact seems to be that when they were made they were timed by the candle, clocks not having been as yet invented and no better standard being obtainable. Such candles, like any others, were sure to burn more slowly at the beginning than later on, and hence their lack of reliability.

Candles of this sort were shielded from the wind by a screen of horn, and at this very day one may buy them, exactly like those of long ago, in England and elsewhere in Europe. Curiously enough, the savages of the south Pacific employ for the same purpose a device very similar in character, which consists of a number of the oily nuts of the candlenut tree strung close together on the midrib of a palm leaf. The string thus prepared is hung up, and, the topmost nut being ignited, it burns slowly downward. Being of nearly uniform size, the nuts burn for just about ten minutes apiece, taking fire one from another in succession, and thus six of them are consumed in just about an hour. It is probable that this primitive method of timekeeping is quite as accurate as the graduated candle or the mediaeval sandglass.

Some of the old fashioned sandglasses were quite elaborate, being arranged in batteries of half a dozen or more, to record the passage of an hour, a half hour, a quarter hour, five minutes, and so on. Very expensive ones were manufactured in Nuremberg, and the finest instruments of the kind were owned by clerical and other dignitaries, the sand used for the purpose being of a round grained sort, which could be counted on to flow easily and with regularity through the aperture provided. To show that faith in the usefulness of such contrivances has not even yet passed away, the writer may mention that in his own family, only the other day, a newly employed cook, being provided with a sandglass for timing eggs, boiled the glass with the eggs, for no reason that she was able to explain except that she was as she understood it, "obeyin' orders."

The two oddest things perhaps in the collection of ancient timekeepers at the Smithsonian institution are a time lamp and a water clock of a pattern almost unheard of. As might be supposed without explanation, the former apparatus contains oil, the burning of which, through the medium of a wick, marks the passage of the hours. The oil, it should be said, is contained in a small glass receptacle, so graduated as to show by the height of the fluid the quantity that has been consumed, and hence the time that has gone by. As for the water clock, some mediaeval Edison must have invented it, so wonderful is the ingenuity of its construction. It consists of a hollow metal cylinder divided into compartments by partitions which radiate from the center and suspended by two strings wound about the ends of an axis running through the middle of the cylinder.

The cylinder, which is hung by its strings from a sort of arch, is partly filled with water and is wound up to the top of the arch by revolving it upon its axis. Then, being released, it would promptly run to the bottom but for the circumstance that the water it contains, trickling through small holes from one compartment to another, detains it, gravity being opposed by the weight of the fluid, which has to be carried upward and around as the cylinder revolves. So artful is the arrangement that the cylinder goes round with an exceeding slowness, being compelled to do so by the percolation of the water from one compartment to another, and in its descent its axis, by coinciding with hour marks on a graduated vertical scale, indicates the lapse of time.

Having a beginning in this simple form, the water clock underwent a high development and wide differentiation. It took the shape, among others, of a series of vessels communicating by tubes that passed through figures of dragons and other images, the floats in some cases being held by grotesque but attractive genii. One apparatus of the kind, which came much later, told the time by the weight of water that came from the beak of a bird and which was received by a vessel on a balance, every pound indicating a certain fraction of an hour. At about the same time there was set up in the capital city of Persia on the terrace of the royal palace a somewhat similar clock, consisting of a balance containing twelve metal balls, one of which fell every hour upon a great gong. This wonderful instrument is said to have been sent by the king of Persia to Charlemagne as a gift.

The Chinese, whose ideas on the subject deserve respect by reason of their priority, do not number the hours as we do. They have names for them, the twenty-four hour period being divided by the people of the middle kingdom into twelve equal parts, each of which is designated in their written language by a character. In this point, again, they were far ahead of the Europeans, for whom the invention of the modern clock seems actually to have been delayed some centuries by the difficulty of splitting night or day into even fractions. To the ancient Greeks and Romans, for example, this problem appeared insuperable owing to the wabbling of the earth, which increases the length of the day at one season and diminishes it at another. For a relatively latter day gentleman named Hipparchus was it reserved to offer the suggestion that the time from dawn to dawn might be broken into twenty-four equal parts.

This indeed was the keynote of the difficulty, the final solution of which has appeared in the modern clock, in its highest development, a chronometer that keeps time within a fraction of a second per week. On the main street in any city of the United States business men may be seen daily setting their watches by such infallible timepieces in the windows of jewelers' shops, and even in the China of today it is the custom for a gentleman to carry two watches, which he examines anxiously at frequent intervals, in order to make sure that they agree exactly.

And yet even to this day there survives in China and Japan, to show the persistence of such things, a method generally pursued by the natives of keeping time by the burning of so called "incense sticks," which will burn slowly for half a day without flame. They are divided into lengths for the hours, and, being made of sawdust mixed with a certain proportion of gum, may be counted on to resolve themselves into agreeably scented smoke at a reasonably uniform rate per inch. Such incense sticks are sufficiently familiar in this country, but, clocks being plentiful, are not commonly utilized for timekeeping purposes.

The Montagnais Indian of Canada, when traveling ahead of a party, sets up a tall stick in the snow, making with his foot a mark to show how far the shadow reaches. By the change in the angle of the shadow his friends on arriving at the spot know exactly how far ahead is their guide.

To keep time with reasonable accuracy must have been one of the earliest necessities of man; hence the remarkable ingenuity of many primitive inventions for this purpose, the utilization of shadows—an idea which had its final development in the sun dial—being probably the earliest, as it was the most obvious. The first sun dial must have been a tree, which may be said to have stood at one end of the path of evolution in timekeeping apparatus, the modern chronometer representing at the other end the final development of such contrivances.—New York Herald.

Wanted the Roles Equal.

In the early sixties of the last century flourished in Paris a writer who used his talent as a professional libeler. His real name was Jacquet, his nom de guerre Eugene de Mirecourt. One day there appeared a violent onslaught on Alexandre Dumas pere. The article openly taxed the great novelist with living on the brains of his collaborators. The father happened to be away from Paris. The son sent his seconds to Mirecourt.

"You say, gentlemen," said the biographer, "that you are acting in behalf of M. Dumas fils?"

The two gentlemen bowed assent. Thereupon Mirecourt rings for his servant. "Tell my son to come to me," he orders.

And, to his visitors' great surprise, there appears a little urchin, his face besmeared with jam. Mirecourt, though, remains perfectly serious. "Gentlemen," he remarks at last, "I feel convinced that my son is as ticklish about his father's honor as the son of M. Alexandre Dumas is about his father's. As it is absolutely necessary that the roles should be equal, you had better arrange matters with him." With which he leaves the two friends of the future eminent dramatist.

A Much Translated Book.

Of "Don Quixote" it may be said, saving only the Bible, it has been translated oftener and into more languages than any other book. A Spanish editor has enumerated 150 editions of the Spanish masterpiece in foreign languages. That computation is certainly short of the truth.

Not only are there more translations in English of "Don Quixote" than any other language, but it is England which from the first has done more honor to the author's work than any other country. The first critical edition of "Don Quixote" in Spanish, with the first life of Cervantes, by Mayans y Siscar, was published in London in 1738, more than forty years before the Spaniards had aroused themselves to do honor to their greatest writer.

This edition, in four handsome volumes, was printed sumptuously in all the glory of the Tonson press under the auspices of Lord Carteret at an age when "Don Quixote" was still appearing in his native country on filthy ballad paper in execrable type, uncorrected and unadorned.—Notes and Queries.